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> [Wage Price Index, Australia, March 2026](#)

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Wage Price Index, Australia

The WPI measures changes in the price of labour, unaffected by compositional shifts in the labour force, hours worked or employee characteristics

Reference period March 2026

Released 13/05/2026

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Key statistics

- The seasonally adjusted Wage Price Index (WPI) rose 0.8% this quarter.
- Over the twelve months to the March quarter, the WPI rose 3.3%.
- The private sector rose 0.8% and the public sector rose 0.5%, seasonally adjusted over the quarter.
- In original terms, the largest industry contributor to quarterly wages growth was Health care and social assistance (+0.7%).

Main features

All sector WPI, quarterly and annual movement (%), seasonally adjusted (a)



a. See Interpretation of index numbers, Percentage change and rounding on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](#) page.

Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses

		Dec Qtr 2025 to Mar Qtr 2026(a) (% change)	Mar Qtr 2025 to Mar Qtr 2026(a) (% change)
Trend(b)	Australia	0.8	3.3
	Private sector	0.8	3.2
	Public sector	0.7	3.5
Seasonally adjusted(c)	Australia	0.8	3.3
	Private sector	0.8	3.2
	Public sector	0.5	3.3
Original	Australia	0.6	3.2
	Private sector	0.6	3.3
	Public sector	0.7	3.4

a. See Interpretation of index numbers, Percentage change and rounding on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](#) page.

b. See Interpretation of index numbers, Trend estimates on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](#) page.

c. See Interpretation of index numbers, Seasonally adjusted indexes and Seasonal analysis methods on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](#) page.

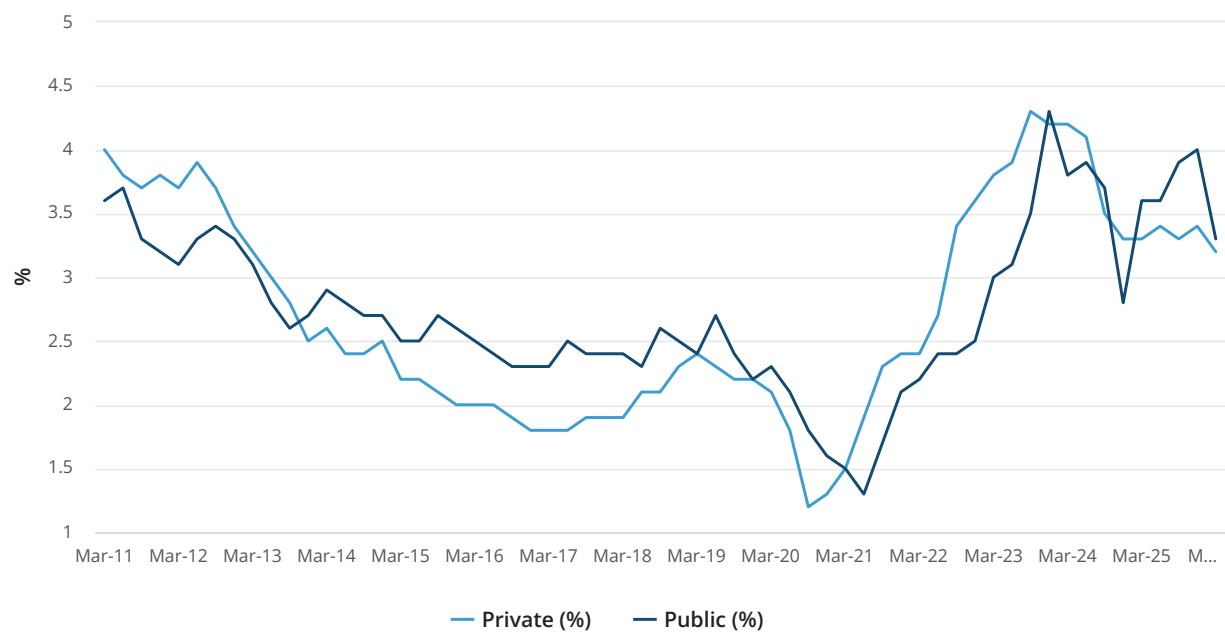
Overview

In March quarter 2026, seasonally adjusted, wages rose 0.8% for a third consecutive quarter, however growth was lower than the same time last year (+0.9% in March quarter 2025). Wage growth was 3.3% for the year to the March quarter 2026, down from March quarter 2025 (+3.4%).

Private sector wages rose 0.8%. Annually, private sector wages rose 3.2%, down from December quarter 2025 (+3.4%) and March quarter 2025 (+3.3%).

Wages in the public sector rose 0.5% over the quarter. Through the year growth was 3.3%, lower than December quarter 2025 (+4.0%) and March quarter 2025 (+3.6%).

Annual wage growth by sector, seasonally adjusted (a)

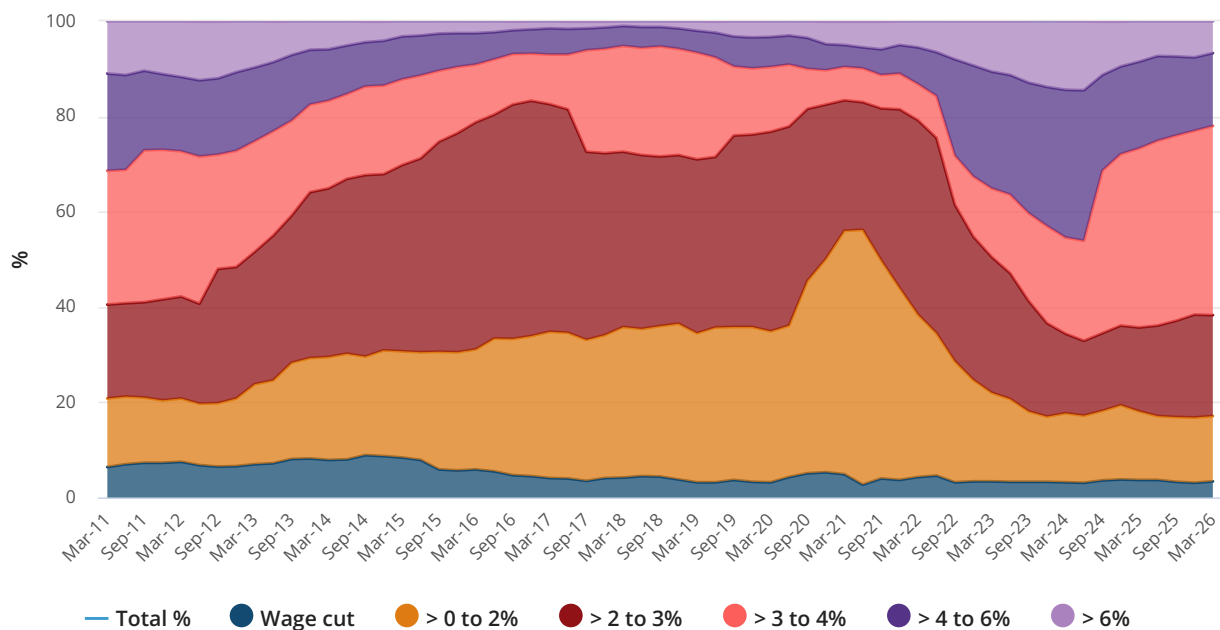


a. See Interpretation of index numbers, Percentage change and rounding on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](#) page.

Annualised wage changes

In March quarter 2026, almost two thirds (61%) of jobs recorded an annualised wage change of more than 2% but less than 4%. This quarter, 22% of jobs recorded annualised wage growth greater than 4%, the lowest proportion observed for this category since June quarter 2022 (+16%).

Annualised wage changes (a)(b)(c)



a. Index series is original, total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses.

b. Share of jobs that experienced a wage change, smoothed using a four quarter trailing average.

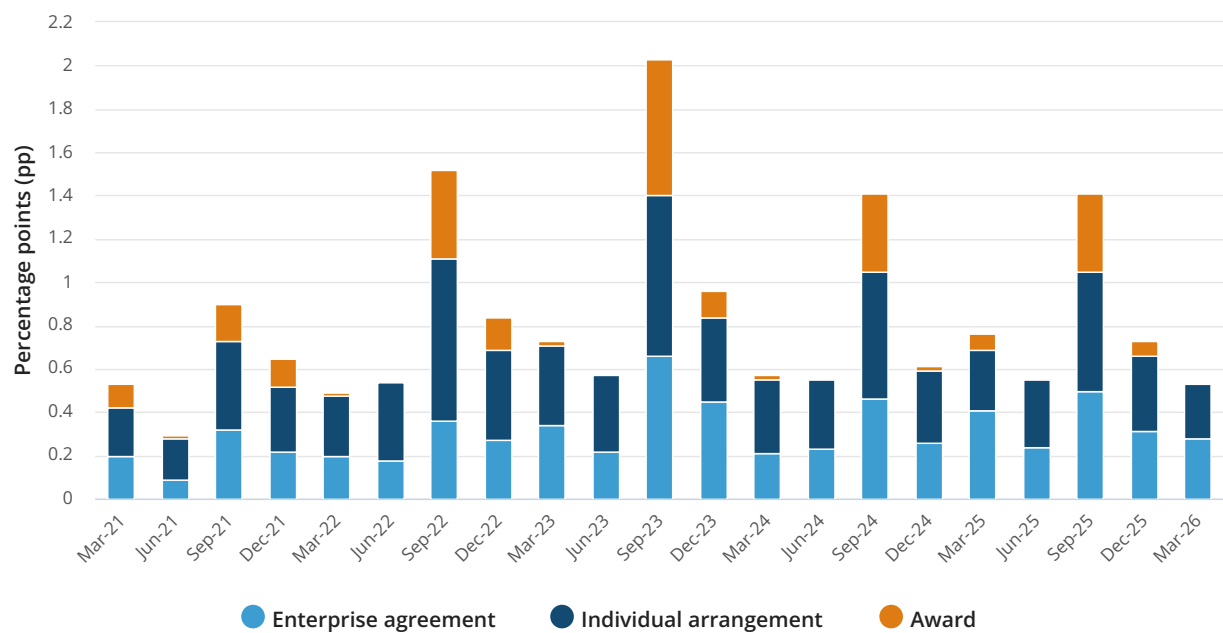
c. Excludes jobs that did not receive a wage change in the previous four quarters.

Enterprise agreements drive quarterly wage growth

In the March quarter 2026, over half of the growth in wages was contributed by jobs with pay set by an enterprise agreement (+52%). The larger March quarter contribution from jobs covered by this method of setting pay was primarily due to:

- rises in state public sector agreements,
- jobs linked to the [Early Childhood Education and Care \(ECEC\) worker retention payment \(https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/workforce/wages/workplace-instruments\)](https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/workforce/wages/workplace-instruments) that shifted pay setting to meet grant conditions, and
- regular private sector scheduled rises.

Contributions to quarterly wage growth by method of setting pay, original (a)(b)(c)



a. Analytical series is total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses.

b. See Method used to calculate analytical series 'Contribution to wages growth by method of setting pay' on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#method-used-to-calculate-analytical-series-contribution-to-wages-growth-by-method-of-setting-pay-\)](#) page.

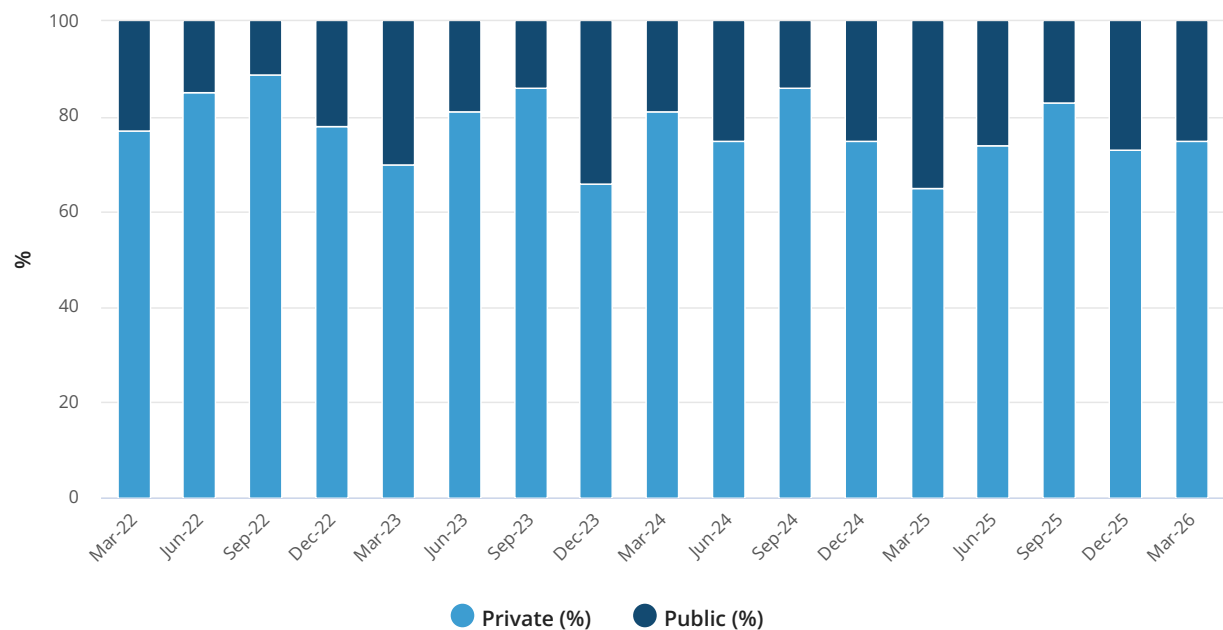
c. See Analytical series index numbers, Appendix B index numbers, methods of setting pay on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#appendix-b-index-numbers-method-of-setting-pay\)](#) page.

Sector wage growth

The private sector was the main contributor to quarterly wages growth. This is typical, as the expenditure on wages is higher than that of the public sector.

The public sector contribution to overall wage growth in March quarter 2026 was lower than the same time last year (+25% compared to +35%).

Share of wage growth by sector, original



Quarterly wage dynamics, by sector, original (a)

		Mar Qtr 2025 (%)	Dec Qtr 2025 (%)	Mar Qtr 2026 (%)
All Sectors	Percentage of jobs with a wage change	21	21	14
	Average hourly wage change	3.9	3.5	3.7
Private Sector	Percentage of jobs with a wage change	15	19	13
	Average hourly wage change	4.3	3.7	4.0
Public Sector	Percentage of jobs with a wage change	39	29	21
	Average hourly wage change	3.3	3.1	3.0

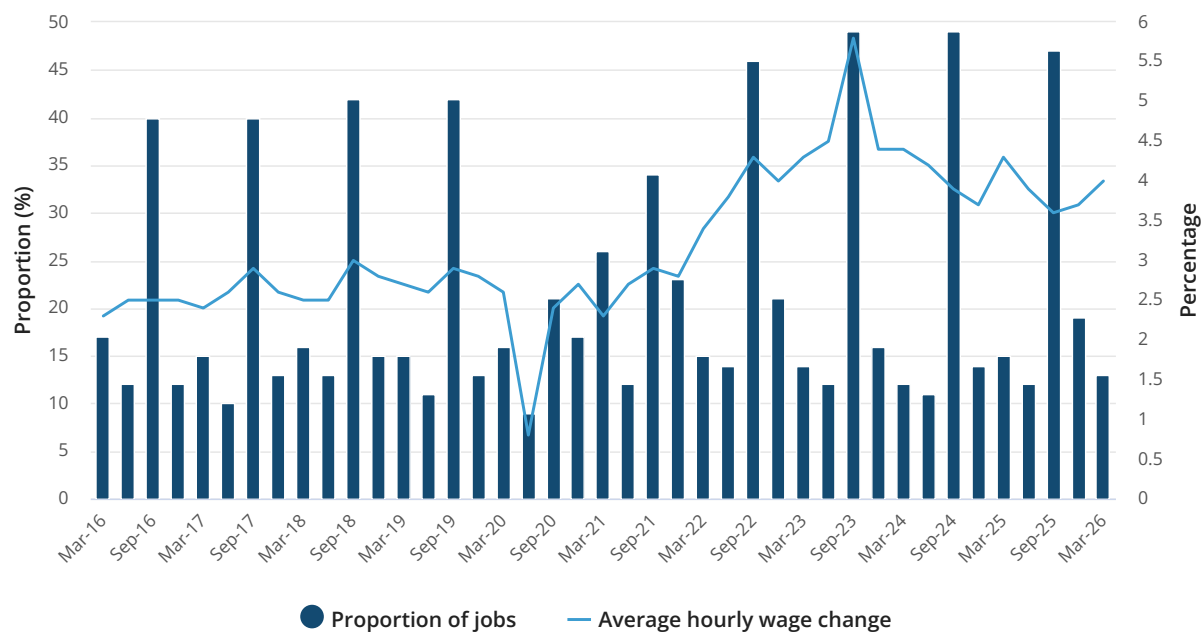
a. Average hourly wage change only includes jobs recording a wage movement in the current quarter.

Private sector

In original terms, private sector wages rose by 0.6% over the quarter, the same as March quarter 2025.

In the private sector, 13% of jobs recorded a wage change, down from the 15% in March quarter 2025. The average hourly wage change for private sector jobs was 4.0%. This was higher than the 3.7% in December quarter 2025 but lower than March quarter 2025 (+4.3%).

Quarterly wage dynamics in the private sector, original (a)



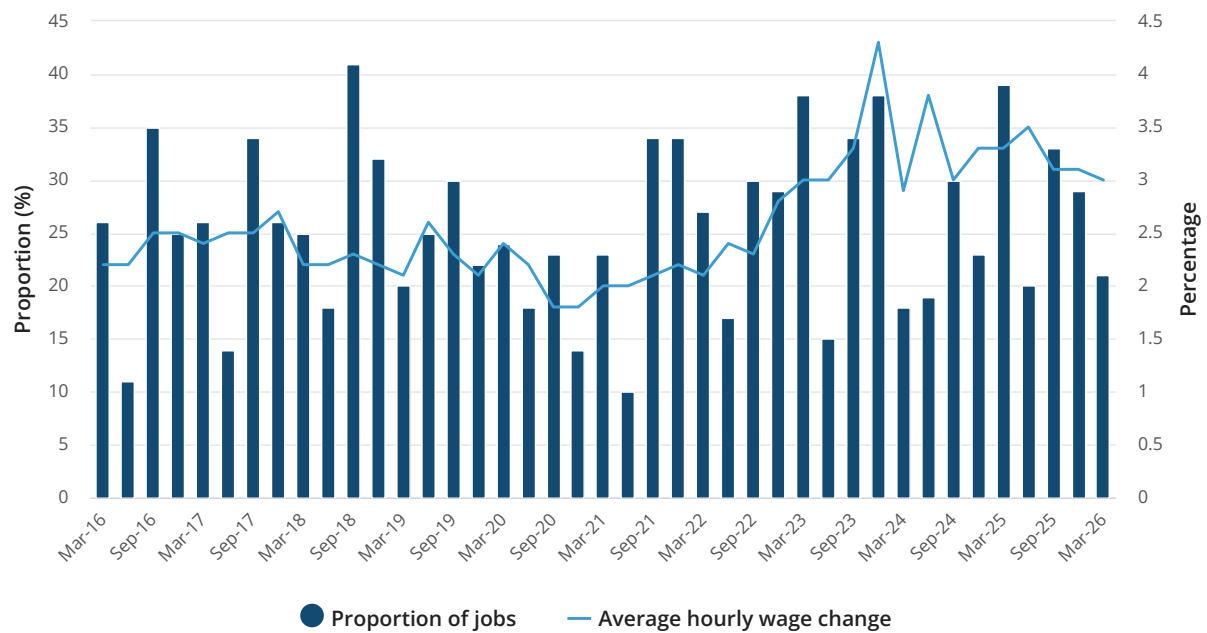
a. Average hourly wage change only includes jobs recording a wage movement in the current quarter.

Public sector

In original terms, public sector wages rose 0.7%, down from March quarter 2025 (+1.2%).

In March quarter 2026, fewer public sector jobs (+21%) recorded a wage change, than in March quarter 2025 (+39%). The size of average hourly wage change for March quarter 2026 was 3.0%, lower than the 3.3% recorded in March quarter 2025.

Quarterly wage dynamics in the public sector, original (a)

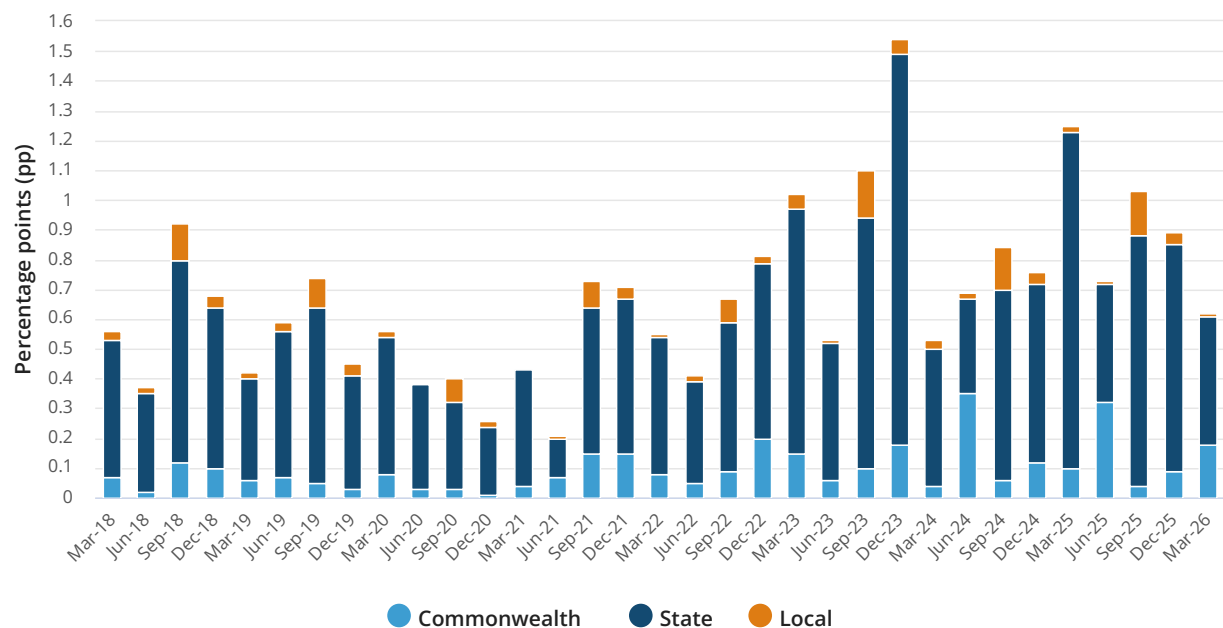


a. Average hourly wage change only includes jobs recording a wage movement in the current quarter.

The contribution made by each level of government to public sector wage growth reflects both the size of the level of government (overall number of employees and total wage expenditure) and the size of any wage changes that occurred.

This quarter, state government pay rises contributed 69% of public sector wage growth.

Contributions to quarterly public sector wage growth by level of government, original (a)



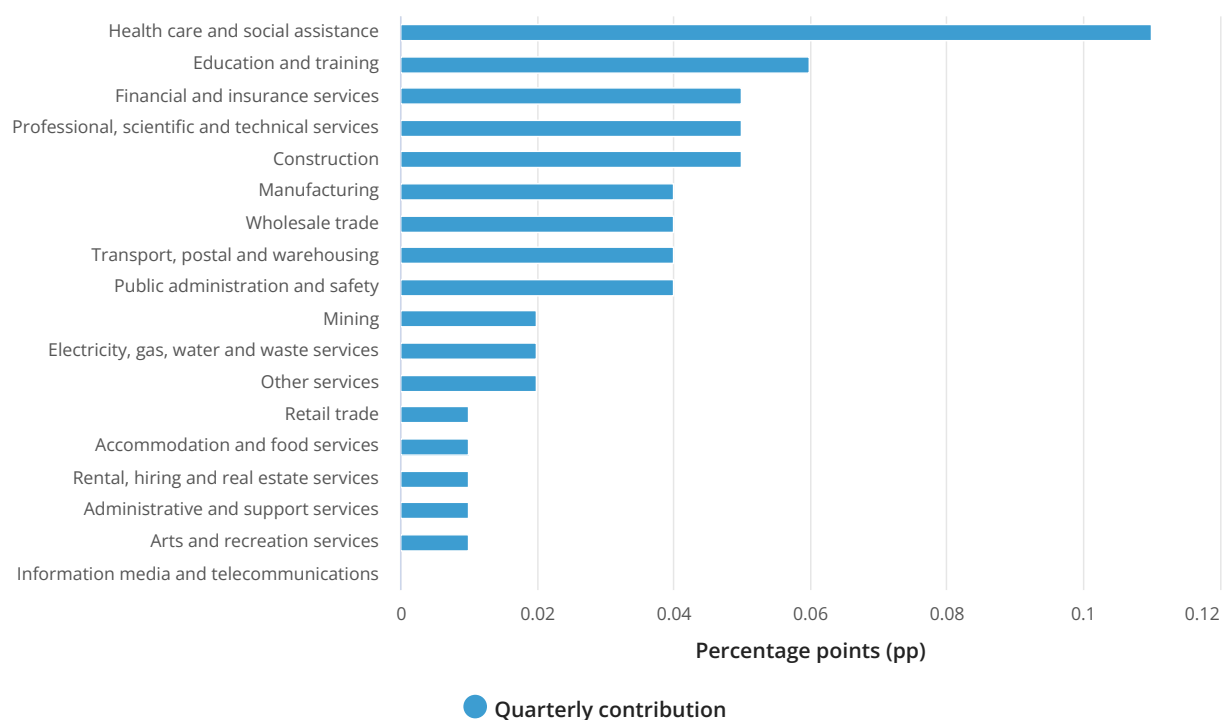
a. See Interpretation of index numbers, Percentage change and rounding on the [Methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers\)](https://lia-methodology/mar-2026#interpretation-of-index-numbers) page.

Industry wage growth

The main contributors to wage growth reflect both the size of the industry (overall number of employees and total wage expenditure) and the size of any wage changes that occurred.

The main industry contributor to wages growth over the quarter were jobs in Health care and social assistance (19%). The Education and training industry (11%) was the second largest contributor to quarterly wages growth.

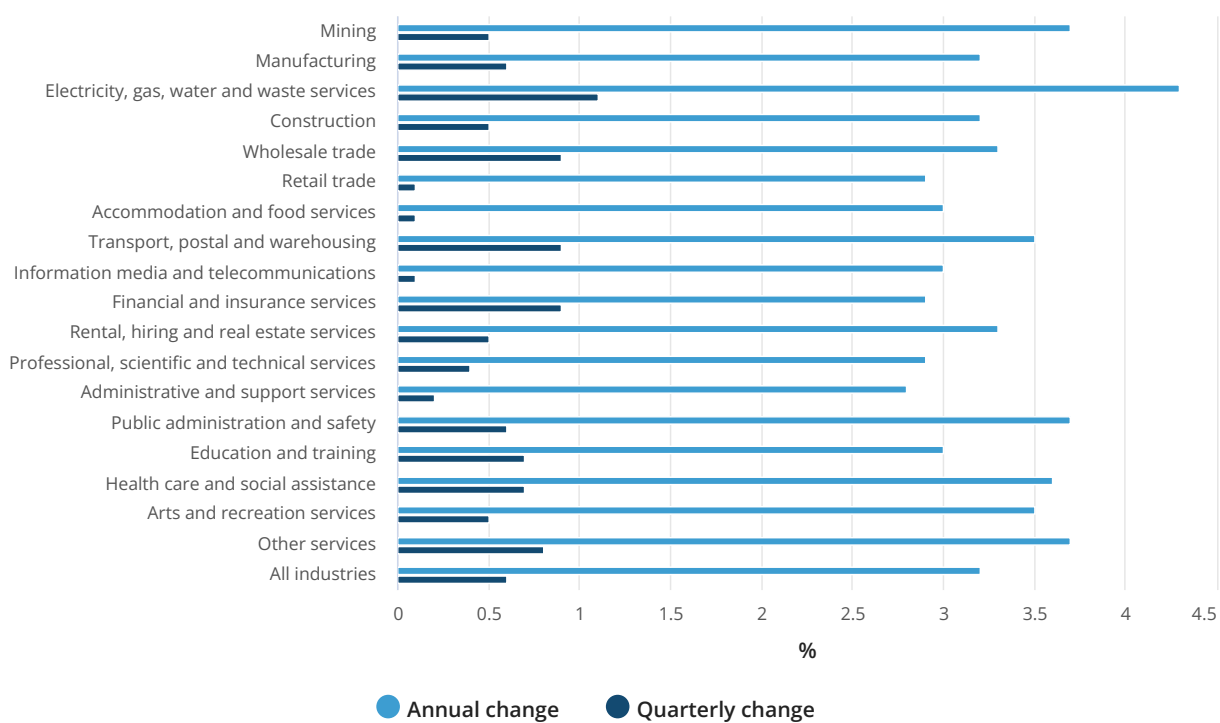
Quarterly contribution - industries



Industry wage growth, estimates in original terms:

- Electricity, gas, water and waste services recorded the highest quarterly rise at 1.1%.
- Retail, Accommodation and food services and Information, media and telecommunication industries recorded the lowest quarterly rise at 0.1%.
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services saw the highest through the year rise at 4.3%.
- Administrative and support services recorded the lowest through the year rise at 2.8%.

Annual and quarterly movement - industries (a)



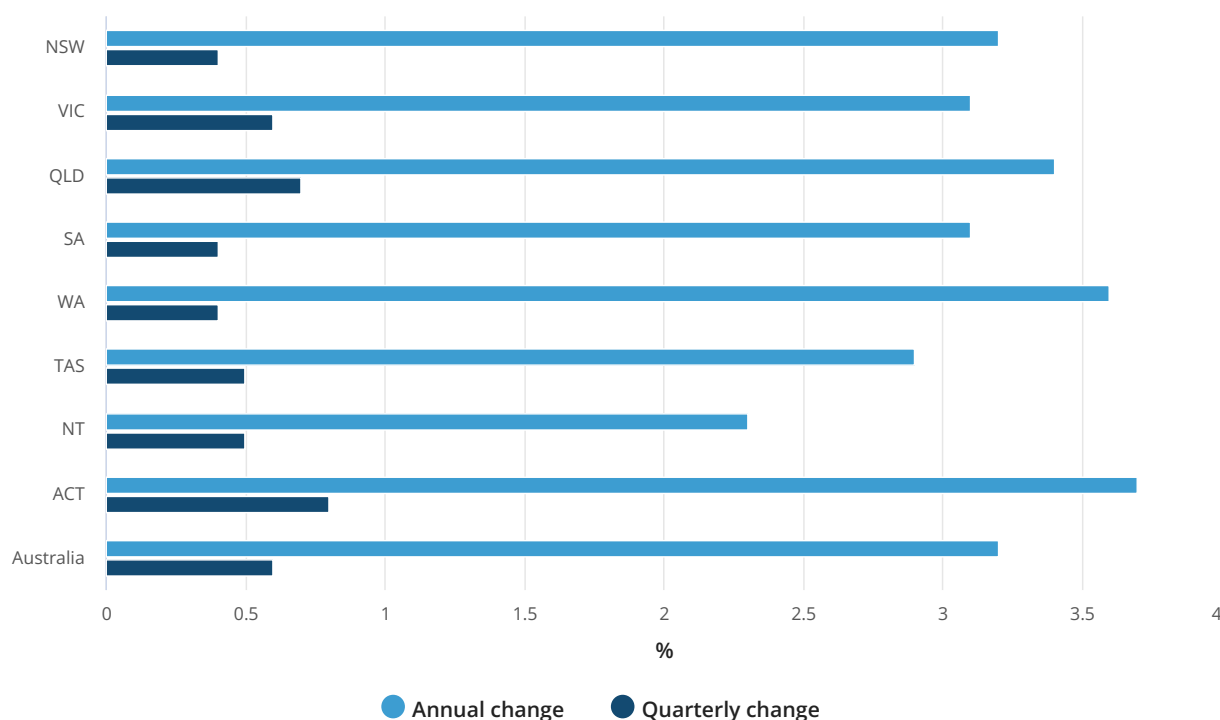
a. Index series is original, total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses.

State and territory wage growth

State and territory wage growth, estimates in original terms:

- The Australian Capital Territory recorded the highest quarterly growth at 0.8%.
- New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia recorded the lowest quarterly growth at 0.4%.
- The Australian Capital Territory recorded the highest annual growth at 3.7%.
- The Northern Territory recorded the lowest annual growth at 2.3%.

Annual and quarterly movement - states and territories (a)



a. Index series is original, total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses.

Survey impacts and changes

Seasonal adjustment and trend



In June 2020, due to the large and unusual impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the private and All Sector series of the Wage Price Index were moved to the “forward factors” method for seasonal adjustment. This method (as described in the article on [Methods changes due to COVID-19 \(/articles/methods-changes-during-covid-19-period#abs-trend-and-seasonal-adjustment-during-covid-19\)](#)) is better suited in an uncertain environment as the seasonal factors are fixed for a 12 month period. The public sector series remained using the “concurrent” adjustment method, as the disruption was not observed in this sector. The trend estimates were suspended for all series at this time.

The ABS completed their annual review of seasonal adjustment in the WPI in June 2022 and as a result reverted all series to “concurrent” adjustment, as the series had stabilised. The ABS also reinstated the trend estimates for all series in the WPI in June 2022.

Data downloads

I-Note



The wage price indexes in Tables 1, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 7b, 8b and 9b are updated and released every quarter. The corresponding financial year wage price indexes in Tables 2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 7a, 8a and 9a are updated and released each June quarter for the preceding financial year. There are no financial year indexes created for Table 1.

Time series spreadsheets

[Download all \(1.17 MB\)](#)

Table 1. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: sector, original, seasonally adjusted and trend

[Download XLSX](#)

[64.7 KB]

[\(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634501.xlsx\)](/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634501.xlsx)

Table 2a. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: all sectors by state, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

[Download XLSX](#)

[51.54 KB]

[\(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634502a.xlsx\)](/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634502a.xlsx)

Table 2b. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: all sectors by state, original (quarterly index numbers)

[Download XLSX](#)

[66.5 KB]

[\(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634502b.xlsx\)](/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634502b.xlsx)

Table 3a. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: private sector by state, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

[Download XLSX](#)

[51.54 KB]

[\(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634503a.xlsx\)](/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634503a.xlsx)

Table 3b. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: private sector by state, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[66.46 KB]

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Table 4a. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: public sector by state, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

[Download XLSX](#)

[51.63 KB]

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Table 4b. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: public sector by state, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[67.09 KB]

[\(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634504b.xlsx\)](/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634504b.xlsx)

Table 5a. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: sector by industry, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

[Download XLSX](#)

[75.29 KB]

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Table 5b. Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: sector by industry, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[145.43 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634505b.xlsx)

Table 7a. Hourly rates of pay including bonuses: sector, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

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[49.34 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634507a.xlsx)

Table 7b. Hourly rates of pay including bonuses: sector, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[59.11 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634507b.xlsx)

Table 8a. Ordinary hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: all sectors by state, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

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[51.55 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634508a.xlsx)

Table 8b. Ordinary hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: all sectors by state, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[66.51 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634508b.xlsx)

Table 9a. Ordinary hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: sector by industry, original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

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[75.21 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/634509a.xlsx)

Table 9b. Ordinary hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses: sector by industry, original (quarterly index numbers)

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[145.42 KB]

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All WPI series: original (quarterly index numbers)

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[137.65 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/63450Table2bto9b.xlsx)

All WPI Series: original (financial year index numbers for year ended June quarter)

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[86.44 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/63450Table2ato9a.xlsx)

Data cubes - Distribution of expenditure on wages, wage price index, Australia

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[170.15 KB]

(/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/mar-2026/63450.xlsx)

Create your own tables and visualisations with Data Explorer

Caution: Data in Data Explorer is currently released after the 11:30am release on the ABS website. Please check the reference period when using Data Explorer.

Wage Price Index ([https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?fs\[0\]=ABS%20Topics%2C1%7CECONOMY%23ECONOMY%23%7CPrice%20Indexes%20and%20Inflation%23PRICE_INDEX_INFLATION%23&pg=0&fc=ABS%20Topics&df\[ds\]=ABS_ABS_TOPICS&df\[id\]=WPI&df\[ag\]=ABS&df\[vs\]=1.2.0&pd=2020-Q1%2C2021-Q2&dq=.THRPEB..TOT..AUS.Q&ly\[cl\]=MEASURE&ly\[rw\]=TIME_PERIOD&ly\[rs\]=TSEST%2CSECTOR\)](https://explore.data.abs.gov.au/vis?fs[0]=ABS%20Topics%2C1%7CECONOMY%23ECONOMY%23%7CPrice%20Indexes%20and%20Inflation%23PRICE_INDEX_INFLATION%23&pg=0&fc=ABS%20Topics&df[ds]=ABS_ABS_TOPICS&df[id]=WPI&df[ag]=ABS&df[vs]=1.2.0&pd=2020-Q1%2C2021-Q2&dq=.THRPEB..TOT..AUS.Q&ly[cl]=MEASURE&ly[rw]=TIME_PERIOD&ly[rs]=TSEST%2CSECTOR))

For information on Data Explorer and how it works, see the [Data Explorer user guide \(/about/data-services/data-explorer/data-explorer-user-guide\)](/about/data-services/data-explorer/data-explorer-user-guide).

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6345.0.

Using price indexes

Price indexes in contracts

Price indexes published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) provide summary measures of the movements in various categories of prices over time. They are published primarily for use in Government economic analysis. Price indexes are also often used in contracts by businesses and government to adjust payments and/or charges to take account of changes in categories of prices (Indexation Clauses).

[Use of Price Indexes in Contracts \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Inflation+and+Price+Indexes+-+Use+of+Price+Indexes+in+Contracts\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Inflation+and+Price+Indexes+-+Use+of+Price+Indexes+in+Contracts) sets out a range of issues that should be taken into account by parties considering the inclusion of an Indexation Clause within a contract utilising an ABS published price index.

Frequently asked questions

The article [Frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) about the Wage Price Index \(/articles/frequently-asked-questions-faqs-about-wage-price-index\)](/articles/frequently-asked-questions-faqs-about-wage-price-index) has answers to a number of common questions to do with price indexes and the Wage Price Index, in particular.

Post-release changes

15 May 2026 – Methodology [Appendix B - index numbers, method of setting pay, original \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#appendix-b-index-numbers-method-of-setting-pay\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026#appendix-b-index-numbers-method-of-setting-pay). March quarter 2026 figures have been updated.

Methodology

Scope

Employing Australian organisations (private and public sector) and eligible employee jobs.

For specific employer and employee job excludes, see [scope and coverage \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/dec-2024#scope-and-coverage\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/dec-2024#scope-and-coverage).

Geography

Data available for:

- Australia
 - Sector
 - State and territories
-

Source

Prices for a range of jobs are collected from a sample of private and public sector employers via the Wage Price Index Survey.

Collection method

An initial selection of approximately 3,300 Australian organisations (public and private) produces a subset of about 20,000 eligible jobs with data submitted electronically over successive quarters.

Concepts, sources and methods

Detailed information about the data sources and methods used to compile WPI are contained in the [Wage Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/wage-price-index-concepts-sources-and-methods/2012\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/wage-price-index-concepts-sources-and-methods/2012).

History of changes

- Expenditure weights updated Dec quarter 2025
 - Wage setting analytical series updated June quarter 2023
 - Sample redesign 2009, reviewed 2023
-

[View full methodology \(/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026\)](/methodologies/wage-price-index-australia-methodology/mar-2026)